

How to prepare to make a good confession:

Begin your preparation with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to see those things that you have done which have offended our Lord and other people. What are those things that you neglected to do that you should have done? Prayerfully meditate on the Ten Commandments. Reflect on a written Examination of Conscience.

When you feel properly prepared to celebrate this moment of grace, call your local parish for the times of scheduled confession, or make an appointment with a Priest to celebrate the Sacrament.

Below is a form which may assist you in your confession:

Make the sign of the cross as you say, **“Bless me Father, for I have sinned, it has been** (state how long since your last confession) **since my last confession, and these are my sins.”**

Next, tell the Priest your sins.

When you have finished confessing your sins, say, **“For these and all the sins of my past I am truly sorry.”** The Priest will give you a suitable penance, and he may give you some advice.

Make an act of contrition. **“O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments, but most of all because they have offended Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.”**

The Priest will say the prayer of absolution. At the end of the prayer, say **“Amen”**.

The Priest will say, “Your sins are forgiven, go in peace.”

Then say, **“Thank you Father.”**

Perform the penance you were assigned by the Priest.

Your sins are forgiven, go in peace!

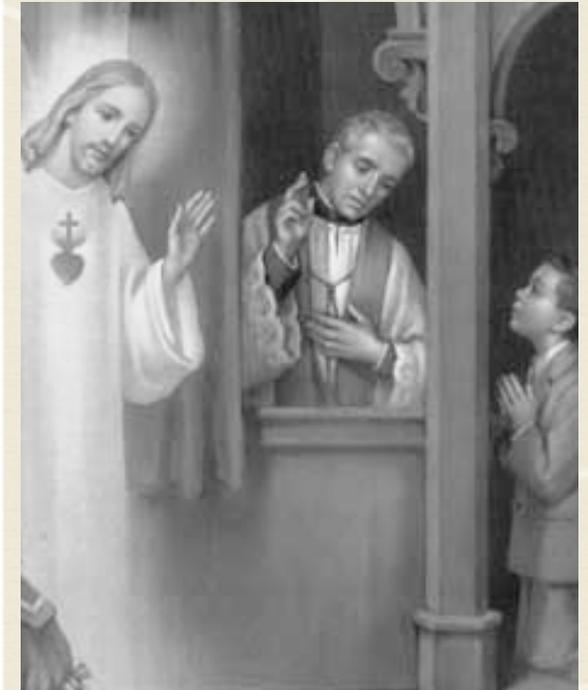
“Whoever thinks a little about his soul goes to confession once a month; whoever wants to save his soul, but does not feel too strongly about it, goes every fifteen days; whoever wants to reach perfection, however, should go every week.”

- St. John Bosco

“In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance.”

- St. Thomas Aquinas

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE



A HELPFUL GUIDE

The Sacrament of Penance is one of the seven Sacraments given to the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the years, this Sacrament has been known by many names. Each of these names expresses an aspect of the graces that comes forth through this Sacrament.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

It is called the sacrament of conversion because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion; the first step in turning to the Father from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the sacrament of Penance, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

It is called the sacrament of confession, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this Sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" – acknowledgement and praise – of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."

It is called the sacrament of Reconciliation, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God." He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."

In preparation for the Sacrament of Penance, it is important to prepare our minds and hearts. This is done by examining our conscience, looking at our lives and seeing how we live up to the 10 Commandments and the teachings of the Church.

It is a good idea to call upon the Holy Spirit in prayer and ask His guidance as you prepare to make a good Confession.

An Examination of Conscience

Many of these sins are mortal and the Eucharist is forbidden until a good confession is made to a priest. If in doubt whether a sin is mortal or venial, consult a good catechism or priest very loyal to the Holy Father and Rome's teachings. A mortal sin involves a serious matter, there is sufficient reflection and it is committed with full consent of the will.

Did I deny or doubt God's existence? Did I refuse to believe God's revelation?

Did I believe in horoscopes, fortune telling, dreams, good luck charms or reincarnation?

Did I deny that I was a Catholic? Did I leave the Catholic faith?

Did I despair of or presume on God's mercy?

Did I neglect prayer for a long time? Did I fail to pray daily?

Did I blaspheme God or take God's name in vain, curse or break an oath or vow?

Did I miss Mass on Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation through my own fault?

Am I always reverent in the presence of the most Blessed Sacrament?

Was I inattentive at Mass? Did I come to Mass late? How late? Did I leave Mass early?

Did I do unnecessary physical work on Sunday?

Did I disobey or disrespect my parents or legitimate superiors?

Did I neglect my duties to my husband, wife, children, or parents?

Did I fail to actively take an interest in the religious education and formation of my children?

Have I failed to educate myself on the true teachings of the Church?

Did I give a full day's work in return for my full day's pay?

Did I give scandal by what I said or did, especially to the young? Was I the cause of anyone leaving the faith?

Did I give a fair wage to my employee?

Was I impatient, angry, envious, unkind, proud, jealous, revengeful, hateful toward others, lazy?

Did I give bad example, abuse drugs, drink alcohol to excess, fight or quarrel?

Did I physically injure or kill anyone? Have or advise for an abortion? Regarding abortion, check your priest to see if you were automatically excommunicated and this has to be lifted first.

Did I participate in or approve of the grave evil known as "mercy killing"? Did I attempt suicide?

Did I willfully entertain impure thoughts and desires? Did I dress immodestly?

Did I use impure or suggestive words? Tell impure stories? Or listen to them?

Did I deliberately look at impure TV, plays, pictures or movies? Or deliberately read impure material?

Did I perform impure acts by myself or with others? Which ones?

Note: in the area of deliberate sexual sins, all are mortal if there is sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.

Did I marry or advise another to marry outside the Church?

Did I abuse my marriage rights? Was I unfaithful to my marriage vows?

Have kept company with someone else's spouse?

Did I practice artificial birth control or was I or my spouse sterilized?

Did I steal, cheat, help or encourage others to steal, or keep stolen goods? Have I made restitution for stolen goods?

Did I fulfill my contracts; give or accept bribes; pay my bills; rashly gamble or speculate; deprive my family of necessities of life?

Did I tell lies? Deliberately to deceive; or injure others by lies? Did I commit perjury? Was I uncharitable in word or deed, gossip or reveal others faults and sins? Fail to keep secrets I should have?

Did I eat meat on the Fridays of Lent or Ash Wednesday?

Did I fast as required on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

Did I fail to receive Holy Communion during the Easter time? Fail to confess at least once a year?

Did I go to Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin? Without fasting (water and medicine permitted) for one hour or more from food and drink?

Did I make a bad confession?

Did I fail to contribute to the support of the Church?